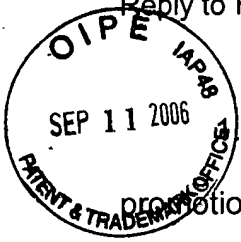


Reply to Final Office Action of March 10, 2006

**LISTING OF CLAIMS**

(Previously presented) An electronic commerce apparatus for offering a promotional award to a visitor of an electronic commerce site, comprising:

a connection to a distributed communication network;

a promotional awards storage area, including a customer identifier storage that contains unique identification information for each visitor to said site, and a visitor parameter storage that contains information pertaining to prior visits to said site by visitors identified in said customer identifier storage; and

an awards rule storage that stores rules for crediting awards to visitors of said site according to information stored in said visitor parameter storage;

wherein a visitor of said site is granted a promotional award by retrieving visitor parameter information from said visitor parameter storage corresponding to customer identification information stored in said customer identifier storage in response to visitor identification information provided to said apparatus upon visitor access to said site, and applying retrieved visitor parameter information to award crediting rules retrieved from said awards rule storage.

2. (Previously presented) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 1, wherein said visitor parameter storage comprises a number of previous visits storage that stores a number corresponding to the total number of visits to said site by a particular visitor, and wherein said awards rule storage stores an awards rule that determines a specific promotional award based on a number of previous visits to said site by a visitor as stored in said number of previous visits storage.

3. (Previously presented) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 1, wherein said visitor parameter storage comprises an award time storage that stores a

time of a last award to a particular visitor, and wherein said awards rule storage stores an awards rule that determines a specific promotional award based on whether a predetermined time period has elapsed since said last award.

4. (Previously presented) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 1, wherein said visitor parameter storage comprises an award amount storage that stores a cumulative total value of awards credited to a particular visitor, and wherein said awards rule storage stores an awards rule that determines a specific promotional award based on the cumulative total award value stored in said award amount storage.

5. (Previously presented) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 4, wherein said award amount rule contains a predetermined promotional award limit.

6. (Previously presented) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 5, wherein said award limit is reset to zero when said visitor makes a purchase from said site.

7. (Previously presented) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 2, wherein said promotional award according to said awards rule increases with successive visits by said visitor.

8. (Original) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 1, wherein said promotional award is credited to a purchase price of a purchase by said customer.

9. (Original) The electronic commerce apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus is connected through said connection to the Internet.

10. (Previously presented) A method for offering a promotional award to a visitor to an electronic commerce site, comprising the steps of:

detecting a site visit by a visitor and keeping track of a number of visits to said site and a number of purchases from said site by individually identified visitors; and granting a promotional award to said visitor in accordance with award rules pertaining to the number of visits to said site by said visitor and purchases from said site by said visitor;

wherein said visitor is motivated to make multiple site visits and a purchase as a result of said promotional award.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said promotional award increases with each site visit by said visitor.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said promotional award increases incrementally with each site visit by said visitor.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said promotional award is cumulative over successive site visits by said visitor.

14. Cancelled.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said promotional award is granted to said visitor if said visitor has not exceeded a predetermined promotional award limit.

16. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said promotional award is credited to a purchase price of a purchase by said visitor.

17. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said visitor must affirmatively select the promotional award.

18. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said electronic commerce site is accessed via the Internet.

19. (Previously presented) A method of offering a promotional award to a visitor of an electronic commerce site, comprising the steps of:

detecting a site visit by a visitor and storing information identifying a visitor and identifying prior promotional awards credited to said visitor;

determining whether said visitor has already exceeded a predetermined promotional award limit;

granting a promotional award to said visitor if said visitor has not exceeded said predetermined promotional award limit and updating the value of said prior credited promotional awards associated with visitor identification information;

wherein said visitor is motivated to make multiple site visits and a purchase as a result of said promotional award.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein an amount of said promotional award increases with each site visit by said visitor.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein an amount of said promotional award increases incrementally with each site visit by said visitor.

22. Cancelled.

23. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein said visitor must affirmatively select the promotional award.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein said promotional award is credited to a purchase price if said visitor makes a purchase.

25. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein said electronic commerce site is accessed via the Internet.